

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/981,654

the rejection is intended to be a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) instead of under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as stated in paragraph two of the Office Action. Accordingly, this rejection will be treated as a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

It is submitted that Furuta is an improper reference for rejecting the claims in this application. The response dated September 4, 2001 was filed with a verified translation of the priority document (JP 8-115897) in this application. Accordingly, as noted in our response of September 4, 2001, the priority date of this instant application is May 10, 1996, which proceeds the U.S. filing date (May 29, 1996) of the Furuta reference. Accordingly, Furuta has been eliminated as a reference in this application. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of claims 1 and 3 as being "anticipated" by Amstutz in view of Furuta be withdrawn.

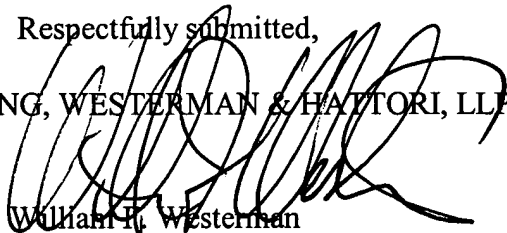
In view of the remarks set forth above, applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's rejection has been overcome. Accordingly, it is therefore requested that the claims in this application be allowed.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosures: Petition for Extension of Time

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